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**Testimony of Roy C. Coffee, III**  
**Director, Texas Office of State-Federal Relations**  
**Commerce Committee, Subcommittee on Energy and Power**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**May 13, 1997**

Mr. Chairman, and members of the House Commerce Committee, Subcommittee for Energy and Power, thank you for the opportunity for the State of Texas to provide this statement of support for the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact Agreement between Texas, Maine, and Vermont.

My name is Roy Coffee and I serve as the Austin Director of the Texas Office of State-Federal Relations, commonly referred to as OSFR. OSFR is the state agency that is officially charged to represent the federal interests of the State of Texas. I am here on behalf of the Governor, the Legislature, and the people of Texas. Joining me are Laurie M. Rich, OSFR Executive Director. and Lee Matthews, Deputy General Manager of the Texas Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Authority.

Passage of the Texas Compact is vital for the environmental security of the people of Texas. We strongly believe that this interstate Compact will provide Texas the needed legal authority to restrict the amount of radioactive waste entering our state, while providing a sound and scientific program for responsible disposal management.

This Compact has broad bipartisan support in Texas. The Governor supports the Compact. The state legislature supports the Compact. In fact, a proposed low-level radioactive waste

management facility in Texas has consistently been supported by Democratic and Republican officials. Former Texas Governors Bill Clements and Ann W. Richards, as well as Governor Bush, are all firmly on public record in support of the Compact, as are Speaker of the Texas House Pete Laney and Lt. Governor Bob Bullock. The business, industry, academic, and medical communities of Texas also support the Compact.

The cosponsors of H.R. 629 reflect broad-based, bipartisan support here in the Congress. In addition, the national significance of this issue has been recognized by the National Governors' Association. During their 1997 Winter Meeting, the Governors approved the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact system, and specifically supported approval of the Texas Compact.

Radioactive Waste Compacts are mandated by Congress to reduce the number of possible low-level radioactive waste disposal sites. To date, the Congress has approved all nine previous compacts encompassing 41 states. The Governors and Legislatures of the three states represented in the Texas Compact have worked hard to negotiate an agreement in hopes of becoming the tenth compact ratified by Congress. I am here today to respectfully request that this Subcommittee favorably report the Texas Compact to the full Commerce Committee.

The Texas Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact is not site specific. It is simply an agreement between the states of Texas, Maine, and Vermont to enter into a compact for the safe and

efficient disposal of low-level radioactive waste from the three states involved pursuant to the mandates that Congress has previously passed.

However, I know from my involvement with this project that opponents have raised concerns regarding the proposed Hudspeth County site. While the Hudspeth County site is currently being proposed by the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, or TNRCC, for possible licensing, this site is not mandated by the Compact. Texas needs this compact to protect its interests regardless of where the final site is located.

I would like to make one other point regarding the proposed Hudspeth County site. While there are some residents of Hudspeth who are opposed to this potential project, many of the residents, including Judge James Peace, presiding officer of the Hudspeth County Commissioners Court, are supportive of this site in their county. While Judge Peace could not be here today, all Members should have a copy of a letter in which the Judge states his strong support for this project and this Compact.

In closing, as the Energy and Power Subcommittee knows, this compact was vigorously negotiated by Governor Richards of Texas and has been endorsed by her successor, Governor Bush. It underwent thorough and open debate both in committee and on the floors of each house of the Texas Legislature and in the state legislatures of Maine and Vermont. It has been subsequently approved by all the parties concerned and only awaits ratification by Congress.

I respectfully request speedy ratification of the Compact, on behalf of the State of Texas, so that the states of Texas, Maine, and Vermont can move forward under the guidelines that Congress has mandated to the states.

Thank you very much for your courtesy in allowing us to be present today, and offer this testimony. Laurie, Lee, and I will be happy to answer any questions.